

NORTH CHICKAMAUGA CREEK GORGE
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Hamilton, Sequatchie

WNEERSHIP: State of Tennessee

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Fairmount, Henson Gap,

ACREAGE: 4,864

Soddy Daisy

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Cumberland Plateau **YEAR DESIGNATED:** 1999

DESCRIPTION: North Chickamauga Creek is a 3,852-acre natural area located in Hamilton County. It is an outstanding deep gorge cut into the sandstone plateau of Walden's Ridge on the Cumberland Plateau. The gorge is approximately ten miles long with steep slopes, sandstone bluffs, and rich coves. A high diversity of plant and animal habitat exists in the gorge. Ten state and/or federally listed plants occur in the gorge including the federally threatened large-flowered skullcap (*Scutellaria montana*) and the federally endangered Virginia spiraea (*Spiraea virginiana*). Bald eagles and peregrine falcons have also been reported here.

A mixed mesophytic forest combines with oak-hickory, and oak-pine forests to form a rich mosaic throughout much of the gorge. Small pockets of old growth forest with towering tulip poplar, yellow buckeye, and basswood occur in hard to get to locations where rugged cove topography has protected forest from past logging. On the uplands and bluffs, there are oak-hickory and oak-pine forests, upland ponds, and sandstone glades and barrens. Riverside shoals and stream cobble bars in North Chickamauga Creek provide habitat for several threatened and endangered plants

The creek is a popular kayaking stream during parts of the year. It is also a popular destination for hikers. The natural area is contiguous to the 1,000 acre Bowater owned North Chickamauga Creek Pocket Wilderness and Registered Natural Area on the east side of the creek. It is also contiguous with tens of thousands of gorge in private ownership. The North Chickamauga Conservancy played an essential role in the acquisition and protection of North Chickamauga Creek Gorge.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church Street, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, phone (615) 532-0431. North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, P.O. Box 358, Hixson, TN 37343, (423) 877-0777. Bowater Forest Products Division, Calhoun Woodlands Operations, 5020 Highway 11 South, Calhoun, TN 37309, phone (423) 336-7205.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access provided on the adjacent 1,000-acre North Chickamauga Pocket Wilderness Registered State Natural Area. Bowater has provided parking, picnic areas and several miles of hiking trails. Limited public access is provided on the state natural area. Contact the Division of Natural Heritage for additional information.

DIRECTIONS: North Chickamauga Creek Gorge is located 15 miles north of Chattanooga. The North Chickamauga Pocket Wilderness can be accessed via Highway 27, take the Thrasher Pike exit and turn left. Proceed about 1 mile to Dayton Pike and take a right. Proceed another mile to Montlake Road and take a left. Proceed 1.5 miles to the entrance which will be on the left.